

Minutes of joint CITAC/FSCOT meeting, Tuesday October 22 2002

Beth Montelone, chair of FSCOT, called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM. A phone linkage to the Salina campus was established so that FSCOT member Gail Simmonds (Aviation and Technology) could be included in the discussion.

Pat Bosco, Dean of Student Life, outlined the history of the use of K-State as the image that he and others are marketing for the university. Over the past 15 years or so, the emphasis has been placed on K-State rather than on KSU, in order to distinguish the university from other institutions with similar initials (e.g. Kent State University). Marketing surveys were done in the period from 1986-1990, and these various surveys indicated that alumni overwhelmingly preferred K-State when they referred to the university. He pointed out the need for consistency in any marketing approach, and indicated that he had heard “absolutely nothing but positive feedback” on this approach. Thus he approached VPAST Unger and inquired about changing the domain name from ksu.edu to k-state.edu as another tool in this consistent marketing approach. The university then acquired the k-state.edu domain name in addition to the ksu.edu domain name and began planning to switch to this hyphenated domain name over a period of months or years.

Negative and positive feedback then ensued... Dave Rintoul (Arts and Sciences, and chair of CITAC) pointed out the results of a [CITAC survey](#), conducted last spring, where only 22% of the faculty members surveyed indicated their agreement with the proposed domain name change. He and others pointed out the difficulties that this switch would entail for faculty members, who were not consulted in advance of the announcement that they would be required to make these changes. The implications for additional work for faculty members and others were quite staggering. A single example might start to indicate the extent of the problem; but there are also many other ramifications. Rintoul pointed out that not all webpages are maintained by staff; many are maintained by faculty. Changes to these webpages will take a lot of work. For example, the term “ksu.edu” appears 9963 times in the files in the 14 subdirectories on the Biology UNIX web space. This is an underestimate of the total problem, since many faculty members also maintain web space for their own research programs. These cannot be globally searched and replaced, a change to k-state.edu would require someone (a faculty member in this case) to open, edit, and save all hundreds or thousands of files. Although faculty members are appreciative of marketing approaches and the desire for consistency, they also would like their concerns to be considered in a policy switch of this magnitude, particularly at a time when the university faces a budget crisis. Next year many faculty lines will not be filled (estimated at 50 in the College of Arts and Sciences alone). All remaining faculty members will be doing additional jobs, with fewer colleagues. Very few will be getting a raise. Research faculty will face additional difficulties in getting journal articles and books after the library goes through another round of serial cancellations and makes further cuts in library hours and services. This is not a time when faculty members appreciate being asked to make another sacrifice of time and effort.

Larry Havenstein (Extension) observed that the hyphenated version was difficult to use in radio broadcasts, although he appreciated the marketing power of “K-State”. Ted Knous (Assoc. Vice Provost for Research) pointed out that the ksu.edu domain is a useful “marketing” tool in other arenas besides recruitment and garnering alumni donations. In communications with granting agencies and research faculty at other institutions, the ksu.edu name indicates that we are a full-fledged research University, whereas the hyphenated version does not accomplish that at all. This perspective needs to be included in any decision re domain names.

VPAST Unger noted that the ruling body (EDUCAUSE) has a policy that allows only one domain name per educational institution (see <http://www.educause.edu/edudomain/>), and that a university technically has only 6 months to make a switch from one domain name to another. Currently the EDUCAUSE board is allowing several institutions to retain two domain names, and KSU has petitioned EDUCAUSE to allow this indefinitely. Holders of other top-level domain names (e.g. .com, .org) are allowed multiple names at present, and it is hoped that the ruling body can implement this same policy for .edu domains. If that is allowed, then the university could keep both domain names, and allow certain units to use one or the other. Those who preferred to keep the ksu.edu domain name, or who wished not to put extra effort into changing addresses, web pages, stationery etc. would be able to do that. She also pointed out that IT staff members could help faculty and staff members make some of the web changes that are needed, but not all of them.

Beth Montelone pointed out the problems with secondary networks. For example, vet.k-state.edu is not aliased to vet.ksu.edu at present. Jay Alloway said that he had corroborated this problem, and that administrators of these networks would be contacted to ensure that those changes were made.

Larry Havenstein and others brought up the fact that the hyphen is really the major sore point, particularly with regard to vocal communication (e.g. radio broadcasts). If the hyphen could be eliminated (e.g. kstate.edu) then the marketing approach could still be consistent, and the problems with clear vocal communication of a web or email address would be solved. It was pointed out by Harv Townsend (CNS) that it was very unlikely that the university could get and keep three domain names, and that we would need to replace the hyphenated version with kstate.edu in order to proceed if that option was deemed to be more desirable or workable. Dean Bosco indicated that this unhyphenated version would be acceptable as a marketing tool.

Shing Chang (Engineering) summarized the results of a [web survey](#) that asked various interest groups about the proposed domain name change. Faculty members in all colleges were opposed to it. In contrast to the marketing surveys mentioned by Dean Bosco, he found that faculty and students were strongly preferred the use of KSU over K-State to identify the university domain name. He noted that he had a [42-page document containing all of the written comments](#), as well as the numerical survey results, and that he would be glad to share this with Dean Bosco and VPAST Unger

Ann Murray (Human Ecology) noted that there will be significant problems with external links to university web pages, and that some faculty members had expended significant effort to ensure that many external sites have links to their KSU websites. Since university IT staff cannot make those changes; they must be made by others who maintain the pages linked to KSU. Harv Townsend indicated that CNS staff can monitor the hits on those pages and send mail to the administrators asking them to make the change, but acknowledged that there is not currently any way to ensure that those changes get made.

Arlo Biere (Agricultural Economics) suggested that the best strategy was simply to wait and see if EDUCAUSE will change the policy. If the policy is not changed, and the university is given 6 months to make the switch, we should re-visit the decision at that time. Rintoul pointed out that it would be best, if that was the case, to ensure that all voices from all interested and affected parties could be heard if that decision needs to be made in the future. He also asked for some clarification of the current situation to be drafted and sent to university faculty and staff who might already be making changes in address lists, web pages, or ordering stationery etc. If there is a possibility that these changes are not needed, then the upper administration needs to quickly communicate this to all units, so that faculty and staff members can re-focus on more pressing tasks. Tweed Ross (Education) indicated that we need to get this problem behind us, since there are lots of other projects that require attention at this time, both for IT staff and faculty members.

VPAST Unger and Dean Bosco agreed that input from the entire university would be sought and considered in the unlikely event that EDUCAUSE forces KSU to choose between the two current domain names. They will also draft a clarifying statement, to be vetted by the chairs of FSCOT, CITAC, and IRMC, which could then be distributed to interested parties.

Meeting adjourned at 4:35 PM.

Minutes submitted by [D.A. Rintoul](#)